

## **Halloween Safety Tips**



**October is the month that children visit neighborhoods all across America in search of “tricks and treats.” Halloween should be a fun and enjoyable time for children. During this time of year, children often engage in “play-acting” by dressing up as their favorite storybook characters or super heroes. Research shows that by encouraging children to engage in play-acting and dramatic play, it serves to foster their growth, creativity, and development. Here are some safety tips that parents can use to help ensure that this Halloween is safer and more fun for both children and parents.**

### **General Safety Tips:**

#### **Before and During “Trick-or-Treating”:**

- ❖ Parents should discuss appropriate and inappropriate behavior with their children before leaving home.
- ❖ A parent or responsible adult should always accompany young children on their neighborhood rounds.
- ❖ Older children should stay in a group, walk slowly and only trick-or-treat in well-known neighborhoods at homes with a porch light on.
- ❖ Always carry a flashlight and make sure that they contain fresh batteries.
- ❖ Walk on the sidewalks, not in the street.
- ❖ Parents should take an extra effort to eliminate any tripping hazards on their own porch and walkway. Objects around the house such as flower pots, low hanging tree limbs, support wires or garden hoses can pose a hazard to young children rushing from house to house.
- ❖ Young children can help with designing a Jack O’Lantern, but the carving should be left to the grown-ups.
- ❖ Plan costumes that are bright and reflective. Make sure that shoes fit well and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame.

- ❖ Add reflective tape or striping to costumes and trick-or-treat bags for greater visibility.
- ❖ Be cautious of open fires and candles since some costumes can be extremely flammable.
- ❖ Children should only accept treats at the door and never go into a stranger's house or vehicle.
- ❖ Remove any mask or item that will limit eyesight before crossing a street. As an alternative, use face paint rather than masks or items that will cover your eyes.
- ❖ No treats should be eaten until they are thoroughly checked by an adult at home.

#### **After "Trick-or-Treating":**

- ❖ Parents should throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious items after sorting and checking children's treats.
- ❖ Hard candies should only be given to children of an appropriate age, since they can be a choking hazard for younger children.
- ❖ Parents should try to apportion treats for the days following Halloween. A good meal prior to parties and trick-or-treating will discourage children from filling up on Halloween treats.

#### **Fun Alternatives:**

- ❖ Have a Halloween Party or locate or start a special event in your own neighborhood.
- ❖ Visit a community center, shopping mall or house of worship that holds organized festivities during this time of year.

Sources: Los Angeles Fire Department, Family Corner.com, and American Red Cross

#### **Additional Resources:**

Resources for encouraging children to engage in play-acting and dramatic play in order to foster their growth, creativity, and development.

**Creativity and Play: Fostering Creativity – This article is located on the PBS web site. The site contains both tips and articles for parents and child care providers.**

<http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/providers/play.html>

**Creative Play Helps Children Grow – This article is located on the National Network for Child Care web site. The article discusses the link between a children's creativity in growth and development.**

<http://www.nncc.org/Curriculum/create.play.grow.html>